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Let me, in the first place, speak about

the sin of robbing God of those hours

of sacred devotion in which we should

hold secret communion with him, those

hours of secret prayer and Bible read-  
ing which are so essential for our own

spiritual life. Ye know that in our Lord's

discourse on prayer in which our Lord

describes that exercise he commands us

to pray in secret as well as to pray

openly. In Matthew we read, "When

thou prayest enter thy closet, and

when thou hast shut thy door pray to

thy Father who is in secret, and thy

Father who is in secret shall reward

thee openly." But, though God com-  
mands us to have our secret hours of

holy communion with him and though

the Christian world thinks that we, as

## Talmage Sermon

By Rev.  
Frank De Witt Talmage, D.D.

Los Angeles, Cal., April 22.—How to

get rid of the "skelton in the closet,"

to overcome the hidden trouble, the un-

repented fault, is the subject of the

sermon today, the text chosen being

Psalm xc, 8, "Our secret sins in the

light of thy countenance."

Most men are born cowards. They

are as babes rocked in the cradle of

fear. As boys they always by night

disliked to travel the road which leads

to the bridge over which Tam O' Shan-

ter was chased by the bogobolins. "Of

course we do not believe in ghosts,"

once said a great English evangelist,

"but most of us feel superstitious when,

alone, we have to walk past a silent

country graveyard in the dark hours

about midnight. And most of us are

afraid of the valley of the shadow of

death when, like the psalmist of old,

we look at it in the dim vista of the

future, although, like him, we know it

is nothing but a black shadow." Of

course there may be men born, like

Horatio Nelson, who never know what

the name of fear means. But if such

men exist they are almost as scarce

as clover tops growing in a January

snow bank or as diamonds imbedded

in a vein of copper ore.

The members of the human race do

not dwell all the time in the City of

Courage. They nearly all live for a

little while, at least once a year, in the

City of Timidity. They more often

cry and tremble before the imaginary

dangers which threaten them than

suffer from the wounds inflicted by

mortal foe. The legend is told that

one day a traveler met the Black Plague

journeying to the famous eastern cap-  
ital of Baghdad. "Where are you go-  
ing?" asked the eastern pilgrim. "To

Bagdad," was the answer, "to kill

5,000 people." A few weeks later, so

goes the legend, the same traveler met

the Black Plague on the same road, but

now returning from Bagdad and going

home. "Why," said this traveler, "did

you not do as you said you intended

to do? You said you were going to

Bagdad to kill 5,000 people. From the

awful report I hear coming from that

doomed region you have killed 50,000

people instead of 5,000." "Ah," an-

swered the Black Plague, with a gleef-  
ul, fiendish grin, "I have kept my

word. I killed only 5,000 people on

account of my fatal touch, but the

other 45,000 people who also died per-  
ished of fear. They killed themselves.

I had nothing to do with it." Yes, the

old legend is right. A great many

professing Christians, have those sac-  
ered hours, yet how often do we steal  
away from God these hours which  
should be devoted to him. In other  
words, we want to try to do spiritual  
work and win spiritual conquests with-  
out first making the necessary spiritual  
preparation for our own souls.

Want a Short Cut.

We are in exactly the same position

in a spiritual sense as is the young

man in a temporal sense who wishes

to leave the well beaten paths of work

and take a short cut up the mountain

of fame. Here, for instance, is the

young man. He wishes to be a lawyer.

He goes to an old lawyer and says:

"Judge, I would like to be a lawyer.

What shall I do?" "What do you know,

my boy?" is the natural question.

"Oh," says the young man, "I have

only been to school a few years and

studied the common branches."

"Then," says the old lawyer, "what I

would do is to go back to school.

Study, study, study! Fit yourself for

college. Then go through the law

school. Sharpen your weapons first be-

fore you go into battle!" "Unneces-  
sary," answers the young man. "What

is the good of spending the next ten

years of my life in rummaging through

stuffy tomes? I do not care what the

Roman law was. What I wish to know

is what the law of today." So the

young man refuses to sit at the feet of

the wise Gamaliels of the great law

schools. He goes at once into a law of-

fice. He is coached along and stumbles

along, and in a couple of years, an un-

developed boy, or, rather, an immature

man, he is admitted to the bar. He is

like a cripple with two wooden crutch-

es and one good leg trying to win a

place in the Olympic games against

the finest athletes of all Greece. He is

like an old Chinese junk, with its long

banks of oars and antiquated javelins,

going forth to naval conflict with the

armor plated cruisers of the modern

navy. Thus with us. We want to do

God's work. We desire to win God's

victories. But we are not willing to

make our necessary spiritual prepara-

tions for the same. We are not willing

to do what God commands us to do.

We are not willing to regularly and

systematically hold certain hours of

each day sacred for prayer and for se-

cret communion with God.

God Their Money's Worth.

Sometimes it is religious work itself

that monopolizes the time. I remem-

ber a dear classmate of mine who as a

theological student was asked to preach

in a little church near to where I used

to preach as a student. This church

was not able to support a regular pas-

tor. It was way back in the country.

So when it came to a man to preach for

a Sunday it worked him as hard as some

people drive a horse through a day. They

wanted to get the full worth of their

money. Thus they got this young man

unwillingly to lead the Sunday school

and teach a Bible class. Then he con-

ducted a morning service; then after a

hurried dinner they drove him back into

the mountains, where he had another

Sunday school to lead and another ser-

mon to preach and a Christian Endeav-

er society to address; then they ran

him back to the main church again,

where he had a Young People's society

meeting at which to speak and then

another sermon to preach. In other

words, from early morning until 10

o'clock, at night he was speaking or